



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Current Opinion

In the recently issued third volume of his monumental work on *Christian Missions and Social Progress*, Dr. J. S. Dennis deals with certain problems that are of interest, not only from the missionary point of view, but also from that of biblical study and religious education in general. Dr. Dennis is a thorough believer in the necessity both of a religious element in education and of an educational element in religion, and in particular in missionary work. On the former point, speaking of the system of education introduced into India by the English government, he says:

The absence of all religious instruction which is carried to the extent of absolute neutrality, is, moreover, a great defect when the higher welfare of society is considered, and goes far to account for much that is disappointing in the outcome of Indian state education. This is freely acknowledged even by many who regard religious neutrality as the only proper attitude for the government to take in an educational system for India.

While making no extended argument on the second point, the legitimacy of education as a missionary agency, the bearing of the facts presented is obviously for the affirmative, and Dr. Dennis' own opinion is evidently that which is expressed in the quotation from Stock: "It is simply matter of historical fact that more converts from Hinduism have been gathered into the Christian church through the influence, direct or indirect, of schools, than by any one instrumentality;" and in the assertion of the missionaries in Egypt that "the mission school is the cheapest and most effective method of reaching the life of the non-Christian community for the purpose of evangelizing it."

These results of experience on mission fields have an obvious bearing on problems that confront us at home. But not less interesting is the opinion of Dr. Dennis on another point. He says:

Immediate conversion should not be established as the one essential mark of success in missionary education. However desirable this may be, and however commendable as the aim of a missionary teacher, it seems a mistake to regard it as the only test, or the final one, of success. In the spiritual and intellectual soil of India, and in fact of the entire oriental world, the seed which springs up quickly does not necessarily issue in the most healthy and permanent growth. It is likely to be without the deep roots which are necessary to nourish and support it, and so may soon wither and die. Spiritual impressions, in some

cases, may result speedily in sound conversion, but, among others, the ripening processes are apt to be slow; yet the final outcome, in the latter case, is not unlikely to be quite as permanent as, and perhaps even richer and sounder in essentials than the first. The missionary must be a man of faith, and must serve in love and patience, if he aims to be the educator of orientals.

Is this which Dr. Dennis affirms of India and the orientals any less true of America and occidentals? We judge not; and if not, the significance of this for the Sunday-school teacher and all indeed who are engaged in religious education is obvious.

From another point of view this volume contains much that is of interest to the Bible student. The results which Christianity has indirectly and in a sense undesignedly achieved by virtue of the fact that it is at the same time a book-religion and a missionary religion are most impressively set forth. Two hundred and nineteen languages, Dr. Dennis tells on competent authority, were reduced to writing for the purpose of Bible translation in the nineteenth century. What an enormous amount of labor is covered by this statement! Who that has not had the experience can form any adequate notion of what it means to take a language without dictionary, grammar, literature, or alphabet, yet in many cases complicated and intricate; first reduce it in elementary form to writing; then little by little discover the terms by which it expresses, as nearly as it does so at all, the great biblical ideas; then translate all the books of the Old Testament and the New into this new language—what a monumental task is this! And, when accomplished, how significant not only for the religious, but for the intellectual future of the people for whom it is done! And this has been undertaken not once, but in the nineteenth century 219 times by Christian missionaries, frequently the whole task being achieved by one man. Has anything to compare with this ever been done for any book except the Bible? Has any other religion, even that of the Jews, a record that can be compared with this?

But this, of course, is only one of the results which Christian missions have accomplished. Whether they are justified must of course in the end be decided by the answer to the question whether they promote human well-being in the largest, fullest sense of the word. Anyone who is honestly in doubt on this point would do well to send for Dr. Dennis' volume.